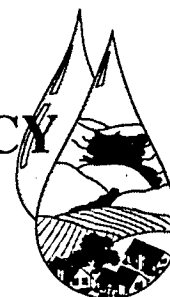


SOLANO COUNTY WATER AGENCY

June 29, 1998



Rick Breitenbach
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Breitenbach:

This letter transmits comments of the Solano County Water Agency on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (March 1998) for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

The Water Agency has a strong interest in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program and we have provided previous comments to CALFED at various stages of Phase I and II. We intend to provide additional policy statements and comments as the CALFED program progresses. Additionally, since there will be another Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR to review later in the process, we will review and comment on that draft document at the appropriate time.

Attached are detailed comments on the Draft PEIS/EIR. We also make the following general comments:

1. CALFED solution principle #6 states that *"solutions will not solve problems in the Bay-Delta system by redirecting significant negative impacts, when viewed in their entirety, within the Bay-Delta or to other regions of California."* The phrase *"when viewed from their entirety"* concerns us. The Draft PEIS/EIR identifies that ecosystem restoration projects may be directed to the north Delta because south Delta locations would be susceptible to the influence of export pumps. This would create a situation where conversion of agricultural land to ecosystem restoration will be concentrated in one part of the Delta. This impact, *"when viewed from their entirety"* may not have an impact on a statewide basis however it will have a major impact in the north Delta. We feel it is important for CALFED to look specifically at significant redirected negative impacts to the north Delta.
2. Ecosystem restoration projects are planned near the intake of the North Bay Aqueduct in the Barker Slough/Cache Slough area. In particular, shallow water habitat projects, which benefit species such as Delta smelt and Sacramento splittail, are planned. This will create more habitat for these special status species close to the intake to the North Bay Aqueduct. There is already a pumping restriction imposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the North Bay Aqueduct when larval Delta smelt are present. The shallow water habitat projects will create more larval Delta smelt and will result in additional pumping restrictions on the

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North Bay Aqueduct. The Draft PEIS/EIR needs to identify this impact and propose mitigation measures such as relocation of the intake and/or a "safe harbor" provision exempting the intake from Endangered Species Act provisions and other pumping restrictions.

3. Page 93 of the Phase II Interim Report includes evaluation of relocation of the North Bay Aqueduct as a part of the Water Quality Common Program for Alternative 2 (similar language is on page 98 for Alt. 3), however, this language is not included in the Draft PEIS/EIR. The Draft PEIS/EIR should be updated.
4. A sanitary survey of the State Water Project shows that the water quality at the North Bay Aqueduct is the worst of all State Water Project contractors. None of the CALFED alternatives improve the water quality at the North Bay Aqueduct, and in fact, may adversely affect the water quality. One of the tenets of the water CALFED program is "*getting better together.*" While the CALFED alternatives may improve the water quality for export interests south of the Delta, the three alternatives do not improve the water quality at the North Bay Aqueduct. Relocation of the North Bay Aqueduct intake is one possible mitigation measure. Another would be funding of implementation of best management land use practices in the watershed that could reduce water quality programs. These measures to improve water quality at the North Bay Aqueduct should be analyzed in the Draft PEIS/EIR.
5. The discussion of the impacts of the alternatives on drinking water supplies does not fully disclose the impacts of the alternatives at all drinking water export locations. Drinking water supplies are currently exported or diverted from the Delta at four locations - The Banks Pumping Plant and the Tracy Pumping Plant in the south Delta, Contra Costa Water District's intake at Rock Slough, and the North Bay Aqueduct at Barker Slough. The impacts of the storage and conveyance alternatives and common programs on drinking water supplies exported from all locations should be evaluated and discussed in the document. The document currently focuses on average water quality conditions at the Banks Pumping Plant and Rock Slough and virtually ignores the North Bay Aqueduct and Tracy pumping plants.
6. The Water Quality Program Technical Appendix includes narrative or numerical water quality targets for each water quality parameter of concern. These water quality targets were developed through the efforts of CALFED agency staff and interested stakeholders participating in the Water Quality Technical Group and the Parameter Assessment Team. The Water Quality Program Technical Appendix states that the targets "will be used as indicators of success to determine the effectiveness of water quality actions." Yet in the Draft PEIS/EIR, CALFED does not reference the water quality target levels, and the targets are not used to evaluate the water quality impacts of the CALFED alternatives. We agree with the use of the water quality targets to measure the success of water quality actions in an adaptive management approach. However, we also believe it is appropriate to utilize the water quality targets in the programmatic level evaluation of the CALFED alternatives, and we recommend that CALFED incorporate the targets into the evaluation of the water quality impacts of the alternatives. We are concerned that the Water Quality Program Technical Appendix to the Draft PEIS/EIR indicates that the water quality targets for bromide and TOC remain unresolved. We believe it is critical that these drinking water quality issues be

resolved before the Revised Draft PEIS/EIR is published.

7. Conversion of active Delta agricultural land to ecosystem restoration or other CALFED purposes will have a significant negative impact on the general economy of the north Delta - as well as impacts to local government agencies, including reclamation districts. The Draft PEIS/EIR identifies possible mitigation measures, however it fails to adequately analyze what the economic impacts would be of large-scale agricultural land retirement in the north Delta. Additional analysis focused on the north Delta should be included in the draft PEIS/EIR.
8. The Ecosystem Restoration Plan includes recommendations for Putah Creek. The Water Agency has done extensive investigations into the hydrology and biology of Putah Creek. We disagree with some of the conclusions in the Ecosystem Restoration Plan. One of the main source documents for the ecosystem restoration plan was a document prepared as part of the instream flow litigation on Putah Creek. That document has not undergone peer review and our experts have substantial disagreements with its findings. Additionally, the trial judge also disagreed with significant portions of that report. It is inappropriate to base the Ecosystem Restoration Plan recommendations on Putah Creek on this document. We would be happy to provide additional information on Putah Creek.

We look forward to reviewing the response to our comments and renewing the forthcoming revised Draft PEIS/EIR. If you have any questions please contact me at 707-451-2904.

Sincerely,

^{by RKS}


David B. Okita
General Manager

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